

Virginia African American Advisory Board  
Draft Minutes  
September 16, 2021

**Members Present (In-Person):**

- Gaylene Kanoyton
- Hope Cupid
- Shirley Ginwright
- Tamara Wilkerson Dia, Ed.D
- Eduardo Lopez
- Tia Yancheng
- Ingrid Granberry Grant, Ed.D
- Cameron Patterson
- Cheryl Ivey Green, DMin.
- Rev. Cozy Bailey, USMC (ret.)
- Karen Charles Dongo
- Troika Edmonds-Howell

**Members Present (Virtually)**

- Larry Boone
- Sheila Dixon
- Precious Muhammad
- Monica Reid
- Chris Sanchez

**Governor's Office Staff Present (In-Person)**

- Hon. Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Hon. Traci Deshazor, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Suzanne Holland, Special Assistant for Advisory Boards & Director of Women's Outreach

**Other Members Present**

- Jordan Bell, Office of the Attorney General

**Welcome**

Dr. Cheryl Ivey Green called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. She indicated that we had not met together in-person since February of 2020. She extended a welcome to our newest members.

## **Roll Call Vote, Approval of the Minutes, Approval of the Agenda:**

Hope Cupid motioned to approve the minutes, with Gaylene Kanoyton offering a second. Gaylene Kanoyton motioned to approve the minutes, with Yvonne Lewis offering a second.

All members present in-person and via phone voted to approve the agenda and minutes.

## **New Member Introductions**

Rev. Bailey introduced our new members. He started first with Sheila Dixon, President of the Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce and a Small Business Marketing Company. Next was Chris Sanchez, Executive Director of the Christiansburg Institute. The Christiansburg Institute oversees the preservation work for a building in Montgomery County and operations of a Museum. Next we heard from Dr. Tamara Walkerson Dias, Executive Director of the African American Teaching Fellows, supporting African American educators in the Charlottesville Area after serving as a teacher and leader in the Charlottesville area. Next was Ms. Tia Yancey, Director of Volunteerism at Averett's Center for Community Engagement & Career Development. And finally we heard from Eduardo Lopez, in the City of Richmond's Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

## **Chair's Report**

Dr. Ivey Green offered a Chair's report. She thanked the Board for the work that they have been doing during the last year. Today we are saying farewell to Mr. Gil Bland, Xavier Beal, Dr. Monica Motley, and Zhyanna Bryant. We have been blessed and fortunate for their service. She thanked Hope Cupid for assuming the leadership of our Survey Committee following the departure of Dr. Motley. We had three Black Table Talk Conversations with Health & Environment, Education, and Criminal Justice. Small Black-Owned Business will be the next Black Table Talk Conversation that occurs. Dr. Ivey Green challenged the Board to begin thinking about our Transition. Dr. Ivey thanked the Governor, and the staff from the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth who have continued to support us.

## **Administrative Update: Transition**

The Hon. Kelly Thomasson shared an update on behalf of the Administration. Dr. Thomasson mentioned the appointment of outgoing Virginia African American Advisory Board member Dr. Monica Motley to the LGBTQ+ Advisory Board. Sec. Thomasson mentioned the time capsule that our former member Zhyanna Bryant was included in, the pardons of the Martinsville 7. She mentioned that over the next few months the administration will continue to work hard. Sec. Thomasson re-emphasized that the Board does exist in state law. The good news is that we are here to stay.

## **Board Administrative Update**

Suzanne Holland offered a report to the Board. She reemphasized the Board's social media pages, email address, and asked that members continue to share posts and invite people to connect. We also want to continue to highlight the contributions of each board member in the community. The next and final meeting of the Northam Administration will be November 4, 2021. Committee meetings will be held before the November meeting. For the meetings we will need to have agendas and minutes. A few big administrative announcements include a New Medicaid Dental Benefit, \$21M announced for affordable and special needs housing loans, \$333M in American Rescue Plan funding for small business recovery (\$250M to RebuildVA program). Follow-up conversations with Commerce can be had by the Board. And finally \$700M in A.R.P. Funding for Universal Broad Band. Today is the Board Review and Approval of Annual Report, followed by a submission of the report to the Board Liaison to begin charging with the Cabinet / staff, and on October 8th we will have a meeting with the Governor to present the report. The location of the meeting has not been set, but likely in the Patrick Henry Building East Meeting Room.

### **Outreach Update**

The Hon. Traci Deshazor shared an Outreach Update. She started with some COmmemorations of Barbara Johns Day, Black Business Month, African Diaspora Month, and Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month. September 19-25 the Governor will be proclaiming 2021 as Historically Black College and University Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Two events are taking place including one with State Hispanic Employees and one with those serving on State Boards and Commissions. Additional Commemorations include Black Breastfeeding Week, Racial Trust & Reconciliation Week, Women's Suffrage Month, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Mental Health Month. Deputy Sec. Deshazor helped to unveil the Historic Mary B. Yancey House & Grasty Library in Danville, Virginia. Virginia State University launched the John Mercer Langston Institute to train the next generation of Black Leaders across the Commonwealth. The institute was spearheaded by former Virginia African American Advisory Board member Wes Bellamy and current member Eldon Burton. Deputy Sec. Deshazor highlighted the passing of Al Brooks a celebrated leader in the Commonwealth. Deputy Sec. Deshazor also highlighted the pardon of the Martinsville 7. Deputy Sec. Deshazor mentioned the work by Rita Davis, the first African American female Counsel to the Governor who handled the legal strategy, Secretary of Administration Grinley Johnson, who handled the logistical elements, and Zhyanna Bryant who had her writing included, and Devon Henry owner of the Construction Company that removed the statue. These individuals were involved in the removal of the Lee Statue. Deputy Sec. Deshazor mentioned convening a meeting with Black Chamber of Commerce across Virginia to keep them updated regarding Administrative Items that might be of interest.

### **Survey Review and Next Steps**

Dr. Monica Motley, former member of the Virginia African American Advisory Board and Owner of Motley Consulting LLC. Dr. Motley gave an overview of the survey's purpose. The initial goal was to get 250 individuals to complete the survey. Dr. Motley reviewed the survey information

sessions that were put together along with the promotional items put together to facilitate recruitment. Every Advisory Board member committed to recruiting 50 individuals to complete the survey. We had 594 total responses, a completion rate of 59%, and the typical time spent on completing the survey was 11m: 47s. Dr. Motley reviewed the next steps and encouraged us to consider how we present and share the information from the survey with the community. She suggested maybe February and doing it as a Black Table Talk to present the survey findings and how we will use that information. Dr. Motley left it up to the Board and the Survey Committee to determine when they would close out the survey.

### **Presentation: Policing, Leadership, and Social Justice**

Dr. Zoe Spencer, Professor, Virginia State University Center for Policing, Leadership, and Social Justice joined the meeting to share regarding her work at Virginia State University. She shared her background, introduced colleagues, and what led to the formation of The Center. On October 13th there will be a Reconvening Meeting held at Virginia State University. The purpose is hoping that the Center can provide adequate training, immersive experiences, to uplift the community.

Dr. Zoe Spencer  
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Director, Center for Policing, Leadership, and Social Justice  
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### **Committee Discussion: Annual Report**

#### ***Education & Workforce***

- 1.) Increase African American Educators
- 2.) Suspension Rates for Marginalized
- 3.) Mental and Behavioral Health for K-12 & Higher Education
- 4.) Career Pathways

#### **Health and the Environment**

- 1.) Improve Food Insecurity
- 2.) Material Health
- 3.) Asthma
- 4.) Covid-19 - Removing Financial & Other Barriers
- 5.) Supporting Part II of Racism as a Public Health Crisis

#### **Small & Black Owned Business**

- 1.) Provide Direct Support to Localities Supporting Black Businesses
- 2.) Provided Continuing Education Opportunities

- 3.) Access Commonwealth's Contracting Procedures
- 4.) Conduct a Census of Black Owned Businesses

#### **Criminal Justice & Public Safety**

- 1.) Comprehensive Study on Impact of Gun Violence: Including Injuries Requiring Hospitalization & Police Intervention
- 2.) Establish Statewide Certification & Standards for K-19 Animals & Handlers
- 3.) Minimum Statewide Anti-Racism Code of Conduct
- 4.) Pretrial recommendation: Call for Virginia to examine its pretrial system to ensure that its citizens are not subject to unnecessary and costly pretrial detention, including supporting and funding policies that implement counsel at first appearance.

#### **Public Comment**

**Dr. Sasha Joy Moon** joined to present regarding the JXN Project. (Join the website to get the mission of the organization and the project work). [JXNResearch.com](http://JXNResearch.com)

#### **Closing Comments**

Suzanne Holland emphasized preparing for Elections of the Board in November. Including an update to the procedures document we passed related to our Board elections process.

#### **Voting to Approval our Annual Report to the Governor**

The Motion to approve our 2021 annual report was made by Yvonne Lewis and seconded by Gaylene Kanoyton. A quorum of voting members all voted unanimously for the motion.

Dr. Ivey Green commented about the Black Table Talk for Small Black Owned Businesses. She also asked the board to hold the October 8th date for presentation of our annual report to the Governor. , And all committee chairs should send revised goals by Sunday September 19th at 10pm to Rev. Cozy Bailey so drafts can be finalized.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.